cut-off from the rest of the world for six months and the telecommunication facilities also come to a standstill due to lack of sufficient staff; and

(b) if so, whether any special project or any specific scheme to strengthen the existing telecommunication systems would be considered for providing appropriate telecom service in those areas in winters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, it is a fact that due to heavy snow fall in winters, the tribal areas of Kinnaur, Lahaul-Spiti districts and Pangi and Bharmor divisions of Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh remain cut-off from the rest of the world for six months as regards road communication. However, telecommunication facilities do not come to stand still due to lack of sufficient staff. Due to closure of the roads however, movement of staff, diesel and spares is affected which sometimes delays restoration work in case of faults.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above. However, installation of new telecommunication systems/augmentation of existing systems are taken up as regular activity for further improvement of telecom facilities.

Redressal of complaints of private telecom operators

738. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any mechanism to study the complaints of private mobile operators;

(b) whether his Ministry have received complaints against private mobile operators; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, the Department of Telecommunications continuously monitors the issues/complaints of private mobile operators to ensure that they are settled at the earliest.

(b) and (c) The Public Grievance Cell of the Department of Telecommunications has been receiving complaints from consumers including complaints against private mobile operators. These complaints relate to billing dispute, poor quality of service, poor coverage, delay in refund of security deposit, wrongful disconnection of service, provision of value added services without consent etc.

Development of IT hub in Shillong

†739. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the atmosphere of Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya situated in the North-Eastern Region of the country is cold and pollution free, similar to the atmosphere of Bangalore;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the literacy rate is very high in Shillong;

(c) if so, whether his Ministry is contemplating to develop Shillong as IT hub on the lines of Bangalore;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The pollution level measured in Respirable Particulate Matter (RSPM) is 45 in Shillong and 66 in Bangalore. The temperature in Shillong region varies between 4 — 24 degree celsius as against 15 — 34 degree celsius in Bangalore. The average annual rainfall is 250 mm in Shillong as against 75 mm in Bangaiore.

(b) Higher than national average (about 63%).

(c) to (e) A Centre of Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), an autonomous society under Department of Information Technology has been approved.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.